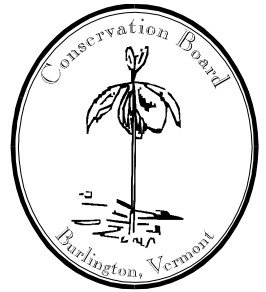


Burlington Conservation Board

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Matt Moore, Chair
Will Flender, Vice Chair
Scott Mapes
Don Meals
Jeff Severson
Miles Waite
Damon Lane
Zoe Richards



Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 4, 2013 – 5:30 pm
Planning & Zoning Conference Room – City Hall Lower Level
149 Church Street

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Miles Waite (MW), Damon Lane (DL), Don Meals (DM), Will Flender (WF), Zoe Richards (ZR), Matt Moore (MM)
- **Absent:** Scott Mapes (SM), Jeff Severson (JS)
- **Public:** Joan White (UVM student)
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Planning & Zoning), Jesse Bridges (Parks & Recreation)

MM, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Minutes

Minutes of February 4, 2013

Email comments from SM.

A MOTION was made by WF and SECONDED by DM:

Accept the minutes of February 4 as corrected.

Vote: 6-0-0

Board Comment

MW mentioned the VEC water quality conference coming up in Burlington. It will be an interesting conference at Main Street Landing. Has the BCB ever been a contributing member of an organization like VEC? MM noted that the Board no longer has a budget.

SG mentioned that the Mayor convened a stormwater policy meeting with representatives of Planning & Zoning, DPW, Parks & Rec and others. It was held within the context of lakeshore zoning proposed in Montpelier, MS4 and CS permit requirements.

MM noted a recent discussion with SM about how the Board can better coordinate stormwater reviews with Megan Moir. MW reiterated the prohibition for new rooftop connections into the city's combined system and the requirement to reduce flows. DM said that we as a Board need to have the fortitude to make such recommendations. MM said that our recommendations to the DRB do not have to be endorsement versus not. They can be geared towards recommended standards for applicants to meet. ZR said that SM's reasoning is pretty sound about minimizing the rate and volume of discharge into the combined system. MW said that beyond meeting the peak discharge standards for the design storm, reduction in volume needs to be achieved. WF said that we need to develop such standards and make them known before they meet with our Board. MM advised SG to make future applicants aware that the BCB will be focused on the feasibility of infiltration. DM mentioned the Lake Champlain phosphorous TMDL.

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WF asked if the elimination of downtown parking requirements was still open for comment with the Planning Commission. SG said that it's been sent on to City Council. Board members will put together an endorsement for their next meeting. SG said that he would follow up with David White as to scheduling for the amendment with the Council.

Public Comment

MM said that there was no meeting today. He spoke with Dan Cahill recently and discussed the potential VNA property acquisition on Archibald St.

Update & Discussion

1. Parks & Recreation

Jesse Bridges appeared on behalf of this item.

Jesse Bridges started by saying that discussion of the Urban Reserve will be coming up soon. Multiple departments are involved in the interim stewardship of the area. The PIAP process is moving quickly in part due to the TIF deadline. Formalizing the trail system is under consideration. The bike path is also a central consideration as related to other improvements within the Urban Reserve. MM assumed until recently that the Urban Reserve was not within the TIF district, but it is. Due to the TIF, the deadline for concepts solicited by the PIAP is April 6.

WF said that the bike path is the highest priority for improvements. The section through the Urban Reserve is in very poor condition. Mr. Bridges said that removal of the concrete pads is also being considered. MW said that the pads act as a cap over some contaminated soils. Mr. Bridges said he is aware of that.

Mr. Bridges went on to say that connectivity, both for walking and biking, is a huge consideration. DM said that he does not bike on the bike path anymore due to the conflicts of multiple types of users. He suggested at least a dashed white line down the center. Mr. Bridges said that bike path improvements within the TIF have already been approved. WF said that a centerline is part of the proposed improvements. Mr. Bridges said that work is underway to lay out exactly what's proposed and what it will cost to do. He said that he'd like to do extensive survey work to determine where easements or additional land space may be needed. The Conservation Legacy Fund may play a role in acquisitions related to bike path improvements. DM questioned whether the BCLF could be used to fund survey work associated with these improvements. SG said that the fund is geared towards acquisition. WF said that there is a portion of the fund set aside for stewardship, but there is a deliberate "firewall" in place to prevent use of the fund for Parks' operational costs. DM said that funding a survey would be fundamentally different from an appraisal for a would-be acquisition. MM said that this is a discussion we need to have.

Mr. Bridges noted Macomber County, VA. The priorities around their green ways are water quality, land conservation, and recreation. We could consider similar principles in Burlington. He noted that there is an opportunity to do sampling around the bike path in the Urban Reserve to determine where the line is between fill and native soils. MW said he's done a number of borings there. There is not a distinct line between native and fill soils. The original sandy bluff was taken down and moved out into the lake. It's sand above sand. Mr. Bridges said he's referring to a land survey to determine where the line is. The bike path could be centered on the line. WF said it would amount to a stewardship expense. DL said that the line is more important to other development than it is to the passive recreation we're talking about.

Mr. Bridges noted that there is a substantial balance in the BCLF. We need to be responsible stewards of the fund. We also need to be strategic about what we're doing – to have a plan in place. WF said that as funding sources are considered, he suggested looking at stormwater utility fees at least as far as stormwater improvements are concerned. There is also money available for upgrades within the city's right-of-way. Mr. Bridges said he'd return to the Board in April for a follow up discussion.

MM asked if the Board would like to participate in consideration of Parks' proposal for improvements within the TIF district. Mr. Bridges suggested checking out the CEDO website for info on the proposal guidelines.

2. Ecological Assessment of Urban Reserve

Joan White appeared on behalf of this item.

Joan White is a student in Walter Poleman's place-based learning class at UVM. She stated that her class is involved in an ecological assessment of the Urban Reserve. They were out there earlier today looking at species transition from low to high elevations.

ZR said that JS is particularly interested in the wetland. The city has a permit in hand to partially fill in the wetland; however, he's concerned that no one has taken a hard look at it. MW agreed that an assessment of its functions and values has not been undertaken.

Ms. White said she'd like to know more about soils quality in the Urban Reserve. The class is looking at this area at a landscape scale and considering it within the greater context. Right now we're looking at several indicator species with various ways of connecting to the landscape. What sorts of conservation needs would they need? She said the class also wants to look at shoreline connections along and adjacent to the Urban Reserve. MM mentioned the idea of ecologically restoring the shoreline along the Reserve. Joan said that it's clear that the Urban Reserve has ecological value. The class is in process of developing an inventory of what's there.

WF said that it would be interesting to check out the chain link fence along the Burlington College property to see whether or not it is blocking wildlife movement. Ms. White said she's seen animal activity in the area. Maps will be produced showing ecological zones and species locations. Recommendations to enhance ecological values will be made. An interpretive walk for members of the public will be hosted at semester's end.

Ms. White asked if the Board was looking for specific deliverables. All of the results will be delivered electronically. Mr. Bridges requested map layers in GIS format. ZR requested a written summary of what was done and then produced. WF agreed that some sort of summary document would be helpful, as would a bibliography.

Ms. White also asked about policy hazards to be aware of. MM said he does not want the students to worry about that. ZR said that CEDO was heavily involved in the student project that was done in 1993. The Conservation Board's involvement was secondary. MM said that the current project is being done at the request of the Conservation Board. Mr. Bridges said that policy calls are ultimately made by the City Council.

MW asked if any underwater assessments have been done yet. Ms. White said not yet but they will do so later in the semester. She mentioned the presence of artificial reefs that are havens for fry within the harbor.

3. Board Goals for 2013

WF mentioned the need to better coordinate stormwater review with DPW. DL said we also need to be better at articulating the need to lessen volumes discharged into the combined system. MW, we need to consider the entire site as its current conditions. DM, if we want a "cheat sheet," we should use our current guidelines as a basis.

MW, continue to be involved in Urban Reserve management, planning, and assessment. ZR suggested a masters' level class for additional research.

DM, use the BCLF for land acquisition. There may be opportunities to use the fund to conserve lands as part of the SD Ireland redevelopment. WF said we need to wrap our heads around what exactly the fund can be used for. If appropriate use of the fund involves revamping the standards, we may need to consider doing so. DM requested seeing a copy of the enabling resolution. WF said he would distribute. MM encouraged Board members to engage in outreach efforts for potential land acquisitions.

MM mentioned completing the update of the Open Space Protection Plan.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.